

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

Fr. Arthur Ward from St. Bartholomew's in Tonawanda recently wrote a letter to Bishop Garrison in accordance with the recent House of Bishop's meeting on Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO). This letter was requesting another Bishop to come for Confirmation and Reception in place of Bishop Garrison's regularly scheduled visit on May 30. The letter was written in a courteous but firm way stating the concerns of the church regarding Bishop Garrison's publicly held positions related to Scripture and morality. This Bishop was still invited to come for his regular visit, but was informed that there would be no confirmands at the one service that day.

Unfortunately, the Bishop responded with a lack of pastoral concern and authoritarian acrimony by stating that, "Happily, I am not planning on being with you on Sunday, May 30..." The Bishop went on to make several demands before Fr. Ward would even be allowed to meet with the Bishop regarding DEPO. The Bishop did so because he had worked with the Diocesan Council to come up with a resolution making all congregations which do not pledge the full "fair share" to the diocese dependant. Before this occurred churches could be declared dependant if they did not pay their PLEDGE to the diocese by the end of the year. So, the Council and Bishop have removed the pledge and made the "fair share" mandatory without a vote at the Diocesan Convention. The Bishop has used this resolution to declare St. Bartholomew's (and St. Michael's) a dependant parish. This means that the Bishop is now asking Fr. Ward to open up all of his church's financial and parish records for scrutiny, to state where the money that would have been

given for the "fair share" has been given, and to make available the Vestry minutes for the first part of the year.

Fr. Ward was told that he must prepare three sermons on three topics of the Bishop's choosing (related to the role and authority of the bishop). Fr. Ward was also informed that his deacon, Ed Kusmierczyk, would be reassigned (much to Fr. Ward's, and Deacon Ed's dismay). The Bishop also informed Fr. Ward that the man St. Bart's has in the ordination process has to leave St. Bart's and go to another church if he wants to continue in the ordination process.

If Fr. Ward's assistant, Clark Hubbard, were ever to leave St. Bart's, the Bishop has forbidden this cardinal parish in the diocese from bringing any clergy from outside the diocese to serve at the church or to take Fr. Hubbard's place.

All of these requirements related to DEPO have nothing to do with what the House of Bishops agreed upon earlier this year.

What the Bishop seems to be doing is to try to bring those of us dissenting parishes back in line by fear and intimidation. He does not seem to be following Jesus' example of servant leadership in Matthew 20:25 ff.

We need to pray for the Bishop. We also need to pray for the Episcopal Church in which other bishops are acting in similar ways toward dissenting parishes.

You all should have received a letter informing you that St. Michael's will be holding a very important meeting in June. This meeting will give you an opportunity to express your opinion about what St. Michael's should do in response to what is going on in the diocese and the Episcopal Church. You need to be there!

LET US GROW!

Fr. Roger

ASK THE RECTOR

St. Michael's has redirected funds from the Diocese of Western New York to other ministries. Why?

First, this was not done to punish the diocese or the Bishop. The Vestry felt that in good conscience we would not be good stewards of your money by contributing to a diocese and national church under the leadership of those who are clearly denying some of the long-held truths related to the Word of God. We did, however, not make this a unilateral decision. We allowed the congregation to decide how much of their giving they wished to go to the diocese and national church.

Some chose to direct the Vestry to contribute a portion of their giving to the diocese and national church.

St. Michael's was not the only church that did not pledge the full fair share asking by the diocese. Five churches officially redirected money from the fair share, with each church making a much smaller pledge to the diocese. This accounted for (according to diocesan statistics) forty percent of the almost \$300,000 projected shortfall that the diocese faces. This means that sixty percent of the projected deficit in the diocese's fair share asking is in the hands of churches who are not officially protesting. This reflects not just a weak economy, but also no small unrest in many congregations over the direction the Episcopal Church is headed. This, it appears, is reflected in a decreased giving in many "progressive" or "liberal" parishes. This has caused many to not be able to pledge the full fair share asking by the diocese.

St. Michael's has done what parishes have done all over the United States. We long for the day in which we can again give

the full fair share to the diocese. This can get closer to happening as the Bishop and Diocesan Council decide to embrace orthodox biblical teaching and morality.

HELP FOR THE HOMOSEXUAL

The Rev. Mario Bergner is a former homosexual. Since leaving the gay lifestyle he has become the husband to wife Nancy and father to their four children: Justin, Joy, Christopher and Isaac. He is the founder and director of Redeemed Lives Ministries, a ministry of pastoral care and discipleship located near Chicago. He is an Anglican Priest serving under the leadership of the Right Reverend Keith Ackerman of the Episcopal Diocese of Quincy in central Illinois.

For twenty years Mario has been a teacher and a pastoral care giver. He has given apologetics lectures on *A Christian Response to Homosexuality* at many universities in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Mario is the author of *Setting Love In Order* (Baker 1995) and of three programs of pastoral care: the twenty-six week *Redeemed Lives*, and two programs soon available on video; the nine-week *Alive Again*, which a basic course on Christian spirituality and the ten-week *Returning Sons*, which is a course for men and women seeking wholeness in their sexuality. He wrote the chapter on "Teaching The Truth About Homosexuality" in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Family Life Education* (Baker 1996) and has published articles in *Good News Magazine*, *Cornerstone Magazine*, *Mission and Ministry* and *Leadership Journal*.

MAY VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

+Financial report was submitted. Expenses were a bit over income, but we have not had to dip into the Rector's Housing fund.

+A lawn mowing service was hired using funds once directed to a lawn fertilizing co.

+June 20 picnic planning is proceeding with much excitement.

+Pentecost and Memorial Weekend service is planned for May 30.

+Voted to send \$500 to the American Anglican Council (AAC) as we are now official members, and \$500 to David Virtue to help support his news and perspective website.

+The Executive Committee of the Vestry, which was given the responsibility to do some research into options available to St. Michael's as we seek to respond to the ongoing crises in the diocese and national church, gave a report. A mailing will be going out to the congregation inviting them to a meeting in June.

+A luncheon honoring our former organist, Marge Lang, will be held on June 6 after the 10:30 a.m. service. Vestry voted to take \$100 from the Worship team to pay for flower table decorations for the event.

MID-WEEK PRAYER AND PRAISE

Those looking for a more intimate time of prayer and praise are encouraged to come together in the church's conference room each Thursday night at 7 p.m. We sing, pray, study Scripture, and share with one another.

On the third Thursday of each month we share communion together. Make plans to join us some Thursday.

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Bible says that the Church is the body of Christ, not the building in which we meet. The Church is each member living for Christ as we meet together and as we are out in the world.

The Church's responsibility is to make disciples of all nations. In other words, we are to take the good news of Jesus out to those who are living the bad news. We often get confused about the word Church and think that the most important thing is to "go to church," by which we mean come to a building to participate in a worship service.

As we look at the early Church we notice that they didn't meet in great "church" buildings. They met from house to house. This really was more feasible when the Church (the Christians) were smaller in number. As the Church grew, it found the need to meet in buildings specifically designed to lift one's heart to God through the visual appearance of the building. Thus, we have convinced ourselves that the only place one can worship is in an official church building (one that "looks like a church").

Many congregations tell of worshipping in a house, a school gym, or another type of building when just starting out, until they can build a "real church building."

The bottom line is that the Church is the people. Where two or more are gathered together in Christ's name, he is present and thus worship can be done anywhere. When we only think of worship as confined to a certain building, then we might not experience the fullness of what God has in store for us through worship.

PRAYER CHAIN

If you request a name be placed on the Prayer Chain, we will be happy to do that. Also, we would like you to please keep us updated on the condition of the person! This would keep us from overloading ourselves with prayers that are no longer needed. You may use the Blue Cards to update us.

USE OF TIME

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of thy Creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rest and recreation are necessary counterparts to work and involvement. Our Lord from time to time, disengaged himself from the routine of giving and filling others to receive and be filled. The summer months are, for many, a time for vacations and leisure. All too often our “escape” from the routine ends up being more hectic and draining than the very hustle and bustle from which we try to get away. We pass up opportunities for true recreation in a swirl of exhausting busyness.

We know that holidays and periods of leisure time cause many to suffer depression and anxiety. One thing that contributes to this is trying to cram too many “things” into a short period of time. Many of us come back from a vacation tired, irritable and just used up. The use of time requires stewardship. Leisure must have some structure. It must include periods of rest, reflection, renewal, and time for “recharging the batteries” as well as periods of activity and exercise.

As Christians, we are called to nothing less than the sanctification of time. We are to use our time – the time God has given us – in a creative manner for his glorification. The clue to using our time (leisure and work) in this fashion is found in prayer; corporate worship and personal prayer and meditation. Now obviously we don’t always do a very good job of this. But when we see our stewardship of time from this perspective, the chances are that we will not become anxious or depressed over what to do with our time. We will be refreshed, filled and reminded that the hours and days and years of our lives have purpose and meaning.

The Rev. T. N. Jordan, St. John’s Dallas, Texas in The Anglican Digest, Pentecost, 2004.

THE WOMEN’S GUILD

On June 2nd, the Women’s Guild will be having a Roast Beef Luncheon. Tickets are \$5.00 and following there will be an auction of used items, along with a door prize. All women of the Parish are welcome to come and enjoy a day of fellowship.

Proceeds of the Auction will go to the Grounds Committee as we have done previous years. Any profit from the Luncheon will further our regular missionary projects such as World Vision.

Tickets are available at the Gift Shop, Lois Conliffe or Virginia Bradley **and** we ask that you get your tickets by May 27th. Hope to see you there!!

Bible Study will continue on Wednesdays through the month of June. We certainly are getting a better understand of the Book of Romans. Thank you Father Roger.

Activities slow down during the hot months of summer, but our women will be active remembering the ill and shut-ins in their prayers. This is something we can all do as we sit in the sun and thank God for his many blessings.

Ladies, remember! We are getting together to wrap utensils for the Parish Picnic on Wednesday, June 16th after Bible Study!

ORGANIST RETIRES

MARGE LANG has retired as our organist, but continues to join the choir in singing praises to our Lord. There will be a special lunch June 6th to commemorate her retirement. Sign up to honor her many years of service with her music for our worship services.

We have already secured the services of a replacement organist. His name is Don Bliss and he comes from St. Matthias in East Aurora. Watch for more information about Don on the Staff page of the website.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY PICNIC

Sunday, June 20th, 2004 , After the 10:30 church service

Hello Everyone.

We are really excited about our "Family Picnic" this year. We are having it right here at church, so hopefully some more of our family will be able to attend. We plan on having tables set up under a tent outside on the lawn and also some set up indoors. There will be hot dogs, hamburgers, pop, coffee, and ice cream. And for those of us who are used to packing all our place settings up, that won't be necessary. They will be PROVIDED!

We do ask that everyone bring their specialties of food. And this year if we could double the size of our dishes that would be great as we are inviting our neighbors to come. And you know, we go by our reputation of having some really good eats around this church.

There will also be games, where prizes can be won for all. And when you are stuffed and need to move around maybe you can take a turn at the Bouncie House (or at least watch the kids). Hopefully a Dunk Tank will be there for those who wish to try their pitching arms. And who knows who will be in the tank to DUNK (maybe the Rector?)..

And to let you all know, Burke Drive from Huntley down to Woodley will be closed off as of 9:00 a.m. so use the Huntley Road side of church to park.

See you all there!

Shirley Gardinier- Coordinator

CANAAN HOUSE

The needs of running a house with varying numbers of women living together are ongoing. We're sorry for not keeping our congregation better informed these last few months.

The Rev. Shirley Trail continues to serve her Lord by caring for women trying to overcome a drug habit and sometimes prison time. It is a 24-hour-a-day job!

Our parish has been a great help over the years in supplying their house with things such as cleaning products, paper products and personal care products for the residents. Any donations you bring to church can be left in the boxes near each entrance. Thank you for helping in the past, and for once again remembering this ministry.

In His Name, *Joan & Brian Webster*

ABOUT OUR FLAG

Many matters are covered under the general heading of Flag Etiquette – too many to be covered in this brief space – but a few will be mentioned here.

The Flag shouldn't be flown after dark, unless properly illuminated. "Properly" means, generally, with a floodlight.

Unless you have an all-weather flag, don't display it in inclement weather.

The Flag shouldn't, when displayed, be allowed to touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, a piece of furniture, whatever. If you stick the flagpole into the ground, be sure the pole is long enough so the Flag doesn't reach the ground.

If the Flag is hung on the side of a building, or from a balcony, the canton or union – that's where the stars are – should be on the Flag's own upper right, that is, to the observer's left.

There are certain times when the Flag is flown at half-staff. (This is difficult for anyone who doesn't have a Flag that is fairly small in relation to the height of the pole.) When the Flag is going to be flown at half-staff, it should be hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position. It should then be raised to the peak before it is lowered for the day. On Memorial Day, it is at half-staff only until noon, at which time it is raised to full staff for the remainder of the day. *Brian Webster*